

Thomas A. Edison Papers Digital Edition

Edison-Miller Family Records

Family Records Series, Part V

[F5B1-F] Edisonia (1899, 1916-1941)

Family Records Series -- Charles Edison Fund Collection -- Charles Edison Papers

Title

[F5B1-F] Edisonia (1899, 1916-1941)

Description

The selected items in this folder cover the years 1899-1941. Included is a twenty-page typescript by Harvey Firestone containing reminiscences of his 1918 camping trip with Edison, Henry Ford, and John Burroughs. Also included are letters discussing Edison's early work in electric lighting and a note regarding a wax recording of the voice of Edison's sister, Marion Edison Page.

URL

<https://edisondigital.rutgers.edu/folder/F5B1-F>

Identifier

F5B1-F

Type

[Family Records](#)

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Family Records Series -- Charles Edison Fund Collection -- Charles Edison Papers

Alternative Title

Edisonia (1899, 1916-1941)

Has Version

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[F5B12A], Publication, C H Oxenham, May 11th, 1899

Title

[F5B12A], Publication, C H Oxenham, May 11th,
1899

Author

Oxenham, C H

Mentioned

- Edison, Marion Wallace
- Edison, Thomas Alva

Date

1899-05-11

Type

Publication

Subject

- Reminiscences (1850s-1860s)
- Expositions, demonstrations, lectures
- Motion pictures

Folder ID

F5B1-F

Microfilm ID

284:170

Document ID

F5B12A

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Timestamp

11 May 1899

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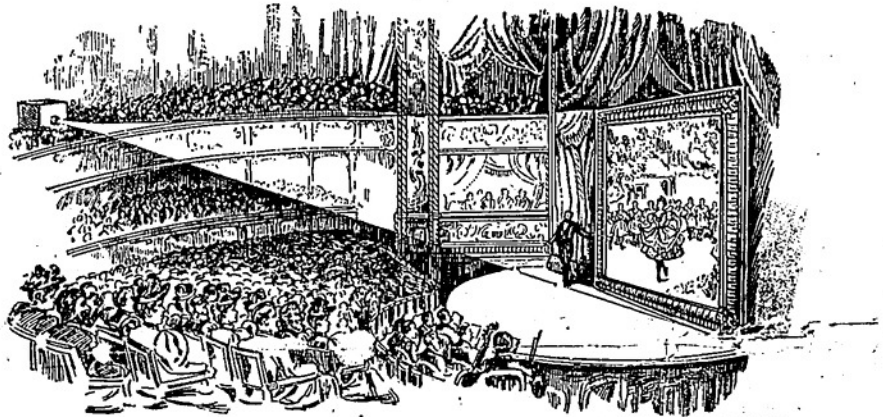


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Edison's Moving War Picture Entertainment

For Benefit of Good Samaritan Lodge No. 52.
Knights of Pythias Hall, South Amboy, N. J.,
THURSDAY, MAY 11, '99.



THE VERY LATEST INVENTION FOR DISPLAYING IN LIFE
MOTION REALISTIC PICTURES OF THE HISPANO AMERICAN WAR.
Roosevelt's Rough Riders in a Cavalry Charge, Return of our Victorious Fleet, Sa-
luting Grant's Tomb, Cavalry Horses in Camp, Spanish Bull Fight, Going to the
Fire, Hobson Sinking the Merrimac, Land Battles, Cake Walk, Pillow Fight, etc.

THE SHARKEY-McCOY FIGHT, 10 rounds, showing knockout blow.

Latest Up-to-date Selections on Edison's '99 Model Superb Concert
Phonograph.

Illustrated Songs by the New York Tenor,

❁ ❁ **JOHN W. LOCKHARD.** ❁ ❁

CARD FROM SISTER OF THOS. A. EDISON:

Milan, Ohio, Oct. 11, 1898: Mr. C. H. Oxenham gave a most satisfactory
entertainment at the Opera House last night. MARION W. PAGE.

Admission, 25c and 35c.

Doors open at 7.30, Commence at 8.

For exhibition address Edison's Moving Picture Exhibition Bureau, 639 Halsey St., Brooklyn, N. Y.

*The last time I talked with
Edison I told him I took a Wax
Record of his Sister's voice Marion W Page
on the bed & in the same room where
she was born in Milan Ohio Oct 11, 1898 He said
to me bring it over and I will make you one
in metal.*

G. W. OXENHAM
716 SOUTH BAY VIEW AVE.
FREEPORT, L. I.
Tel. 1480-J Freeport

C. H. Oxenham
Nov 10/46
85 years old

G. H. OXENHAM
716 SOUTH BAY VIEW AVE.
FREEPORT, L. I.
Tel. 1480-J Freeport

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[F5B12A1], List, Illuminating Engineering Society, February 1916

Title

[F5B12A1], List, Illuminating Engineering Society,
February 1916

Editor's Notes

Supplied year and month

Author

Illuminating Engineering Society

Mentioned

- Williams, Arthur
- Mitchel, John Purroy
- Edison, Thomas Alva

Date

1916-02-00

Type

List

Subject

Awards & honors/clubs & societies

Folder ID

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F5B12A1

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Timestamp

1 February 1916

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Mayor of City of New York
Honorary Chairman

Mr Arthur Williams, Chairman

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Mr C W Rice	Secretary	American Society of Mechanical Engineers

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Mr Frederick Whitridge	President	Third Avenue Railway Company
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Hon William Williams	Commissioner	Department of Water Supply, Gas and Electricity

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[F5B12B], Letter from Harvey Samuel Firestone to Thomas Alva Edison, December 13th, 1918

Title

[F5B12B], Letter from Harvey Samuel Firestone to
Thomas Alva Edison, December 13th, 1918

Author

Firestone, Harvey Samuel

Recipient

Edison, Thomas Alva

Mentioned

Burroughs, John

Date

1918-12-13

Type

Letter

Subject

- TAE friends and associates
- Travel (TAE and family)

Folder ID

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Timestamp

13 December 1918

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H.S. FORESTONE
AKRON, OHIO

December 13, 1918.

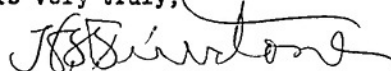
My dear Mr. Edison:

Mr. Burroughs has favored us by writing the impressions he gained on the camping trip. I have had copies made, and am enclosing one for you, and Mr. Burroughs would like your suggestions.

I am also enclosing a copy of what I dictated from memory one evening at my home.

If we could all add a little of our impressions, I think we could get out quite a nice souvenir book, and I would be glad to have some one undertake it. I am sure that we could get out a book that in time would give us a very pleasant hour or two, looking it over and refreshing our memory of the delightful trip.

Yours very truly,



-enclosures.

Mr. Thomas A. Edison,
Orange, New Jersey.

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[F5B12C], Reminiscence, Harvey Samuel Firestone, December 1918

Title

[F5B12C], Reminiscence, Harvey Samuel Firestone,
December 1918

Editor's Notes

Supplied year and month

Author

Firestone, Harvey Samuel

Mentioned

- Firestone, Harvey Samuel, Jr
- Barber, Ohio Columbus (O.C.)
- Ford, Henry
- Burroughs, John
- Hurley, Edward Nash
- Edison, Thomas Alva
- De Loach, Robert John Henderson

Date

1918-12-00

Type

Reminiscence

Subject

- TAE personality and character
- TAE friends and associates
- Travel (TAE and family)

Folder ID

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Document ID

F5B12C

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1 December 1918

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[ATTACHMENT/ENCLOSURE]

ROUGHING IT WITH MY GOOD FRIENDS,
MESSRS. EDISON, FORD, BURROUGHS, HURLEY, DELOACH,
AND MY SON, HARVEY.

-----oOo-----

Sunday morning, August 18th, Mr. Ford, Harvey and I left the farm about ten o'clock for Pittsburgh, after a delightful and quieting night's rest in "Mother's tent." We arrived at the William Penn Hotel there about two-thirty p. m., and telephoned to the Branch to inquire where we were to meet Mr. Edison, Mr. Burroughs, Mr. Hurley and Mr. DeLoach. We found that they were having their lunch at Mr. Hitchcock's, Mr. Edison's brother-in-law, and that they would meet us at the Branch in about an hour. After our luncheon we drove to the Branch, where we met the party, and there we waited for Mr. Cline, who was piloting a Ford, heavily laden.

After having our pictures taken and interviewing a number of reporters, we changed Mr. Cline's heavy load from the Ford to a ton and a half White truck and started on our camping trip, Mr. and Mrs. Hitchcock piloting us out of the City toward Greensburgh.

We selected our first camping place about two miles east of Greensburgh on H. A. Miller's farm a half mile back from the road in a beautiful grove near a well. After camp was pitched the culinary department got busy and served a delicious supper. It was a cool evening and we sat around the camp fire and told stories until twelve o'clock. Our reason for staying up so late the first night was the fact that we could only have Mr. Hurley with us for one night.

The next morning we got up about eight o'clock. After breakfast we shot mark and had a number of visitors, among them the mayor and newspaper men from Greensburgh. Harvey brought a very attractive young lady - a Miss Marion Hend - who proved to be a general favorite among the campers. We broke camp about eleven o'clock, drove to Greensburgh and procured gasoline and oil, and Mr. Burroughs bought a linen duster. After considerable effort we finally got started on our way toward Connellsville.

Just as we were entering Connellsville the Packard car, driven by Harvey, in which Mr. Burroughs

[ATTACHMENT/ENCLOSURE]

Mr. Ford, Mr. Hurley and I were riding, broke the fan iron, punctured the radiator and broke the fan. With Mr. Ford's mechanical genius, our wearing material and the tools in the automobile, it was repaired sufficiently to drive into Connellsville, where we went to a garage in the center of the town - there, within ten minutes we had the entire population giving us their assistance to repair the machine. Again Mr. Ford's mechanical skill came into play, when he took off the fan iron, repaired it, and replaced the mended parts in the machine. This, however, took us about three hours.

In the meantime we were waiting for Truck No. 1, and after the machine had been repaired and we were driving on toward Uniontown with Mr. Edison's car and the two Fords carrying Willmott, Sato and Fredie, we found that we were still missing our Truck No. 1, driven by Harry. On this day Mr. Cline was riding with Harry. Sato with the Ford went back to find them, but in the meantime they had telephoned to us at our agent in Uniontown, stating that they had broken the drive shaft, that they would have it repaired and would come on in about an hour.

It was then late in the day, and as a summer hotel was located about seven miles from Uniontown, we advised them that we would go to this Hotel and that they should come there.

We telephoned to the Summit Hotel for rooms and asked them to have dinner ready for us when we arrived, as we had not had anything to eat since breakfast. Our lunch, composed of fried chicken and other good things was on the broken truck. We refused to go to a restaurant or hotel and, therefore, did not have anything to eat.

When we arrived at the Summit Hotel we were received and advised that dinner would be served for us at once. They gave us very nice rooms and served an especially good dinner. We all were very much opposed to a hotel, but when we were forced to take refuge in one it was a very delightful opportunity to get a bath and a shave. In the evening, Mr. Ford as usual insisted on a long walk. Of course, I wanted to be congenial and I said: "Certainly, I will join you in anything" - and we walked to the top of the mountain and down the other side. There was a beautiful view of Uniontown when we reached the top of this mountain, but the distance was great and I was very tired and upon our return retired for a good night's sleep. During the night our truck and the balance of the party arrived and we were all up early in the morning, had breakfast and started on our way.

[ATTACHMENT/ENCLOSURE]

The first objective was Keyser's Ridge, where Mr. DeLoach had his mail addressed to him. In our route we were to turn to the right, Keyser's Ridge being the farthest point east and from this point we started south. As we passed along the pike we saw a road turning to the right with a large sign pointing to Oakland - our next objective. Being in the front car, I stopped at this place and called attention to it, but Mr. DeLoach and Harvey insisted that we drive on to Keyser's Ridge to get Mr. DeLoach's mail. While we were arguing as to whether we were on the right road, Mr. Edison decided to get a bottle of pop, and Harvey went to the store to get it for him, where he ascertained that we were at Keyser's Ridge.

On our way toward Oakland we stopped for lunch near a beautiful stream beneath some large shade trees. Here Mr. Ford got a pail of apples and gave the little girl a dollar. She immediately ran back to the house and came back with an old gentleman carrying a pail of cider.

After our repast and drink of cider we drove on to Oakland, where we filled our caravan with gasoline and oil. In the meantime Harvey, following his usual custom of being kind to other people, went into the candy shop and purchased a box of caramels for Mr. Burroughs - that being his favorite kind. This displeased Mr. Ford and he snatched the box of candy and threw it up the street, much to the great surprise of the entire population, which as usual had congregated around our cars.

When we left Oakland we drove seven miles on a concrete road toward Parsons. About five o'clock, after leaving the concrete road we passed over some very rough and wild country, finally coming to a small river, which we learned was Horseshoe Run. Mr. Edison and I drove along Horseshoe Run about a half mile up from Lead Mine, West Virginia, where we found a very picturesque camping place, with the mountains, a logging railroad and the river in the background. We pitched camp and prepared our dinner.

There was only one thing lacking. Mr. Ford wanted to hear the water ripple over the rocks and as there was not enough fall to the river to produce the sound, Harvey, in his usual congenial way to please everyone, thought that he would place some more stones in the creek to make an artificial water fall. About the time he had raised the water eight inches he wanted to turn the stones and slipped, falling into the river. Thereafter the fall was complete.

While we were having our dinner in the early dusk the natives from the lumbering camps and the mountaineers began to gather forming an unusually rough looking crowd, and our crew and official photographer

[ATTACHMENT/ENCLOSURE]

were somewhat alarmed and came in to advise us that they were perfectly willing to remain up and guard the camp that night - Mr. Cline proudly showing us his Smith & Wesson in his holster, but Mr. Ford convinced us that kind treatment of these friends would insure our perfect safety. Thereupon we went out and made peace with the enemy, offering them cigars. They proved to be the most congenial and hospitable people we had met. They offered to bring down for Mr. Ford the next morning from the logging camp their logging engine to have moving pictures taken of Mr. Ford running the engine, and they not only brought down the engine and train, but by the time we had named, they had moved down almost the entire camp. After the moving pictures were taken we broke camp and started traveling in the direction of Parsons.

The country we passed through was most wild, which was indicated by the lack of road signs - the farm lands and the highways looking alike, and it was natural for us to miss our route. We drove about five miles down a mountain, making it necessary for us to retract and drive up the mountain until we reached Parsons, where we got gasoline and purchased supplies for the culinary department.

When we arrived in Parsons, West Virginia, all the townsmen came in to the drug store to shake hands with the celebrities. Mr. Edison laid in a supply of milk chocolate. Mr. Ford gave advice and helped in fixing a leaky water jacket on the small White truck.

After lunch we rode on to Elkins and when we arrived there the natives turned out en masse. Mr. Ford and I sent telegrams - Mr. Edison and Mr. Burroughs as usual remaining in the street in their car surrounded by the kodak and autograph collectors. In Elkins the mayor and some of the business men offered us the hospitality of the Cheat Country Club, located about twenty-five miles on our way. As we drove out of Elkins passing through Beverly, the Simplex sheared off a spring shackle bolt, and after a good deal of persuasion I got Mr. Edison to go with Harvey, and Mr. Burroughs and Mr. DeLoach to drive on and locate a camping place. So the entire caravan went on its way with the exception of the Simplex and one Ford car. Again Mr. Ford's mechanical genius came into play. All that was necessary was a bolt. We saw a threshing machine about three quarters of a mile across a field and went down to where they were threshing and, as luck would have it, Mr. Ford picked out just the bolt he wanted. After meeting the threshers, we went back and the spring was fitted up. In all we were delayed about two hours. We then started to hunt up our fellow campers and drove over the mountains until after dark. Finally down the mountain we came to a bridge, and opposite the bridge we found Harvey in the Packard.

[ATTACHMENT/ENCLOSURE]

5.

While we were happy to see him, we also were very anxious to locate the dining tent. Much to our surprise he said they had a fine place to camp about one mile down the road and he piloted the way until we landed at the Cheat Country Club. This amazed us as Mr. Edison had absolutely refused to go to any Club - but, alas, to our greater surprise, they had just arrived at the Club and advised us that dinner would not be served for about an hour. As it was, we had dinner at nine-thirty. It was a very cold damp night and a fine warm club house with a big open fire place was very much more attractive than our camp along the river. As we went upstairs to a bath room with hot and cold water and looked into the nice comfortable rooms it was still more tempting than our tents, and Mr. Burroughs, Mr. DeLoach, Harvey and the crew could not resist spending the night in the club house, while the old-time campers stuck to their tents.

We broke Camp Cheat about ten o'clock in the morning. Mr. Ford and I stopped at an outa field to "cradle" oats. After lunch we drove on in the direction of Hot Springs, Virginia, hoping that we might possibly reach Warm Springs that night, but we crossed a bridge at the wrong place and went up into a mountain and found ourselves in a small town called Solar Springs. We then decided that we would pitch camp and inquired for a site. We were advised that up the road about half a mile there was a splendid place, which we located in a beautiful grove. At the edge of this grove there were warm springs and a concrete bathing pool - a toll of fifteen cents being assessed for a bath.

At this camp we found ourselves short of bread and other provisions, as we had hoped to reach Warm Springs where we could get supplies. We called at the General Store and found there was no bread to be had, but learned that there was a hotel upon the hill and that possibly we could get some there. We went up to the hotel and inquired of the lady who came to the door if we could buy some bread. She said no; that she did not have any to spare. We asked her if she would bake some so we could have it in the morning and she said that she was out of flour. She finally consented to bake the bread if we would furnish the flour, so we put a sack of flour on our commissary truck and Harvey and Mr. Cline took it up to Mrs. Engle's that night.

In the meantime I told her how much Mr. Edison liked apple pie and she said she had enough flour to bake several apple pies. She brought them down to us just as I was finishing my dinner and as Mr. Edison had already had his dinner he insisted that we save him an apple pie for his breakfast, so we took great care in doing this - but during the night the dogs got into our commissary truck and ate Mr. Edison's apple pie.

[ATTACHMENT/ENCLOSURE]

6.

But when the good lady brought up the bread to us in the morning the depth of the loaves was less than an inch and a half. She said that the flour had been soaked in gasoline and it would not raise. However, we had this bread for the next two or three days; we did not seem to find a town in which we could purchase the "staff of life."

The next morning we broke camp about nine-thirty and started for our next objective, Hot Springs, reaching there about eleven fifteen. We spent an hour at the Homestead and received word from Mr. Hurley that he could not join us. We stopped for lunch about seventeen miles from Hot Springs enroute to our next objective, White Sulphur Springs, near a nice stream of water along the road. Here we found a large concrete pool which apparently was part of a water power system. One of the boys shut off the gate which proved to shut off the water at the power plant located about two miles down. While we were having our lunch a gentleman came up in a very bad frame of mind, complaining about our shutting off his power. We made due apology and asked him what sort of a water power plant he had there and were told that it was the power plant of O. C. Barber for his phosphate plant.

Mr. Ford and I were anxious to see Mr. Barber's water power plant, so we decided to drive down the mountain to see it, and discovered that he had a most modern water power plant - in fact the most modern plant in the south.

After examining this plant we went on our way to White Sulphur Springs. Here we endeavored to secure a room and bath in order to shave and get clean linen on, but my looks did not get a room. I went from one hotel to another but did not succeed. I was informed that they had a bath house here so made use of it and then went to a barber shop. Mr. Ford and Mr. DeLoach waited for me - Mr. Edison and the balance of the party going on to find a camping place. Harvey took them out and then drove back for us. We arrived about dusk. The crew were just pitching camp as they had had some trouble in finding a desirable place. However, Camp Tuchahoe proved to be a very comfortable camp on the Tuchahoe River, which always made it very handy to wash your face in the morning. Nothing unusual happened and the next morning we broke camp.

Our next objective was Harrows, West Virginia. On this trip I was especially impressed by the abandoned summer hotels. We finally arrived at Sweet Springs, where there were a number of brick buildings. It was a very imposing looking place with fine surroundings. I made inquiry and learned that some of the buildings were a hundred years old, yet well preserved and apparently in

[ATTACHMENT/ENCLOSURE]

7.

very good condition, but less than twenty-five per cent. were occupied. Here there was a spring with sweet water which was not very tasty. There was also a bathing pool and a number of people bathing. However, this pool looked as if the frogs had been bathing more than the people and was very stagnant.

We stopped on route at Gap Mills, and after a good deal of argument with the leading citizens of the town, especially the doctor and manager of most affairs, who insisted on our having lunch in his front yard, we drove on and had our lunch close to a stream where all the natives gathered. Mr. Ford went to look at a mill. We waited there for half an hour until one of the leading citizens went to his home and brought a can of maple syrup for Mr. Edison. We had a very good agent at this point.

From Gap Mills we drove to Harrows. The country traveled through was rough and wild. Harrows was a railroad center, the population rough and uncivilized. We drove out of Harrows, taking one of the citizens with us to find a place to camp, and this, I think, is the only camp in which no one inquired who we were or knew any of the campers. When we found a camping place, which proved to be one of our best, we were short of provisions and could not buy anything in town, so Harvey and Mr. Cline drove through the country until they found chickens, fresh milk and eggs.

We left Wolf Creek Camp later than usual and started over bad roads to Bluefield. Mr. Burroughs grew very tired and with Mr. DeLoach took a train at Oakvale for Bluefield. About one o'clock we got Mr. Edison to stop for lunch at a short distance from Princeton.

We then started over the first macadam road in many a day. We were especially pleased when we struck this highway, inasmuch as we did not have any more tubes for the White Truck, carrying a 38 x 7 pneumatic tire. But as usual, some part of our equipment got out of order, and as usual the car we needed most. In order to be safe and have our lunch on time, we had decided to prepare our lunch and put it in Sato's and Willmott's Ford car, and on this day that car punctured a tire and the other trucks passed it by and let them repair it alone, which delayed our lunch, and Sato was not in good humor when he arrived with the cargo and delayed it longer. However, after we had luncheon and Mr. Ford had interviewed a farmer, getting information with reference to the surrounding country, we journeyed to Princeton, stopping there for gasoline and thence to Bluefield.

At Bluefield we met Mr. Burroughs and Mr. DeLoach.

[ATTACHMENT/ENCLOSURE]

who had gone through on the train and had their dinner. I had ordered a tube sent there by parcel post. As it was Sunday I was afraid it would be impossible to get it. The hotel proprietor telephoned to the post office and someone happened to be there, who said the tube had arrived. Mr. Cline and I drove up to the post office, wrapped on the side door and were shown every courtesy and received the tube.

My companions were anxious to make better time, so we drove on to Tazewell rather fast. Part of the caravan got off the road. They had been so used to being in the mountains where there were scarcely no roads at all or only one, that when they came to two roads they got lost.

It was late when we reached Tazewell. Mr. Edison was getting nervous, so I told him to drive on and find a place to camp and that our car would remain there and direct each truck as it came along. I waited at least two hours for the last car to arrive. In the meantime I talked to the Circuit Judge of West Virginia and all of the people around the hotel. Finally Sato and Willmott came along in the Ford car and I rode with them. We drove and drove until we met a party of young people from Bluefield, who were having their lunch along the roadside. They invited us to have lunch with them - not particularly for myself and Willmott - but for Sato, who proved to be a novelty to the young people.

We drove on under the direction of the young people until we met Harvey and Mr. Ford, who were returning for us. We reached camp about dusk.

After dinner, which was later than usual, Harvey and I took a long walk. We heard some people singing and playing accordions, and I gave Harvey a lesson, telling him what great pleasure and satisfaction there was in living a simple country life, and the enjoyment these people got out of life in general.

The next morning we broke camp about ten o'clock. Our next objective was Lebanon and then Hansonville. From Hansonville to Abingdon we traveled over six miles of very rough roads. Mr. Burroughs was particularly emphatic as to this fact - saying that these roads were the most damnable and despicable roads in the United States, and he even went so far as to stop people on the road. The only consolation he had was the fact that the gentlemen proposing this camping trip and route had to ride over the same roads. He even suggested that the Germans had built the road as being one of their most cruel acts. However, after reaching Abingdon we struck paved roads into Bristol and the contrast was very delightful.

[ATTACHMENT/ENCLOSURE]

7.

Harvey reached Bristol before we arrived and we had forgotten that in leaving our route list and giving the name of the town that was not all that was necessary. We found that there was more than one street in Bristol, and, therefore, were at a loss as to how and where we were to meet in this large city. However, we learned that Harvey was at the Hotel Virginia and we had no trouble in locating this hotel, where we had luncheon. When we arrived there, the clerk, waiters, etc., did not recognize any of us and as we were accustomed to having so much attention when we went into the dining room this was a disappointment. I suggested that we have a table where we could all have lunch together, but the head waiter advised me that that was impossible, that the tables were not large enough and that we could take what was there or find our lunch some other place. We finally accepted this suggestion and took the tables that he assigned to us, but before we had ordered our lunch, word came through that it was Mr. Edison and the other celebrities and very quickly the tables were arranged to our satisfaction. The head waiter went into the kitchen and I think cooked the meal himself or at least looked after it. By the time we had finished our luncheon the usual crowd had gathered around us, including the Mayor of the town and the newspaper men, the Edison phonograph agent, the Ford agent and the Firestone agent. The rest of our party had also arrived.

I had had an extra 36 x 7 tire sent by express to this place and went with the agent to secure this tire. We also called at his place of business - Mr. Charles J. Harkrader. We had our pictures taken in front of the store with Mr. Ford and then drove to the telegraph office and sent a telegram to Mr. Seely, Grove Park Inn, Asheville, North Carolina, stating that we would arrive there Tuesday evening or Wednesday morning and that we would like to camp on Sunset Mountain if he could arrange it. We then returned to the hotel where we met the rest of the mountaineers and citizens of the town. At the urgent request of Mr. W. H. Cox, a leading merchant and capitalist, also somewhat of a politician, who came to me and asked if I would not have the party do him the honor and give him the pleasure of stopping at his farm, one of the finest farms in Tennessee - so he said - which was located right on our way, we went there. When I had said that it would give us great pleasure to visit his farm, he immediately made a rush for the telephone and had an argument with the telephone operator because he could not get his farm at once. He said he was going to have some very distinguished guests at the farm and he had to notify his wife, - when he finally got her he said: "Sarah dear, I am going to have some very distinguished guests, Mr. Edison, Mr. Ford and Mr. Burroughs."

[ATTACHMENT/ENCLOSURE]

10.

They will be out in a few minutes and have everything primed all up. They will want some milk, apples, etc." He then asked if it would be permissible for him to take the leading editor with us. I told him that it was entirely agreeable and asked Mr. Cox to ride in our car and the leading editor in Harvey's car. We drove to the farm which was about ten miles out of Bristol and he had a very fine place. When we reached there Mrs. Cox would not come out. Mr. Cox brought out his daughters and introduced them and apologized for Mrs. Cox not being able to come out. I said - "If you will excuse me I will go in and get her." Mr. Ford said - "I'll go too." So I jumped out of the car and Mr. Ford went in with me. Mrs. Cox was baking and she proved to be a very pleasant lady, and after meeting Mr. Ford found out that he was only human after all. I insisted that she come out and meet Mr. Edison, and she declared that she could not, but if we would wait five minutes she would come. She went up stairs and put on her Sunday dress and came out and I told her that she did not look as good as before. We had our pictures taken and promised to send Mr. Cox a picture, then drove on our way.

It was raining when we drove into Elizabethtown, so we went into a garage and waited. While we were in this garage they had telephoned that we were on our way from Bristol and in each of the towns we passed through there were large crowds waiting in the streets.

After it had stopped raining, we went on and arrived in Johnson City, where Harvey, Mr. Burroughs, Mr. DeLoach and Mr. Cline had already attracted an unusually large audience, which honor they shared with our party when we arrived. The editor of the Johnson City Staff came out and other leading citizens, who introduced themselves to the party and insisted that we remain in the town or camp near there. The Editor's boy jumped on the car and sold Mr. Edison a paper. His father told me afterwards he had said to the boy he would give him a good whipping if he did not sell Thomas A. Edison a paper.

The rest of our caravan had not arrived and as it was not pleasing to the distinguished gentlemen to sit in the automobiles and have people stare at them, we started on our way to Jonesboro and left Mr. Cline to direct the rest of the party toward this city. Leaving Jonesboro we drove through the Soldiers' Home, but did not find a place to camp. Traveling between Johnson City and Jonesboro we were going over a route where they had no water except cistern water which was not pleasing to us. It was late when we arrived at Jonesboro.

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The town had heard of our party coming through and a call had been sent out to meet us with the city band, but they were not successful in getting the band. We found a spring about two miles beyond Jonesboro. This spring was back of a home in the field and it was very difficult to get to the camp. To enter the field we had to drive through a barn and Harry tore the top off of his truck, as the barn was not high enough to allow the truck to pass through. Therefore, we had to send for a pick and shovel to let down the truck sufficiently to go through the barn. Mr. Edison and I went back to this field, where the spring was located, and it did not look like an ideal place, as they had many cows and hogs around. After we had selected a place and Mr. Edison had hired boys to gather fire wood, we waited until almost dusk before the trucks arrived.

Mr. Burroughs was somewhat tired and insisted on having his tent put back in the field next to the woods about half a mile away. He claimed that the crew and the boys made so much noise, that they never went to bed and always woke him up in the morning, and, therefore, as soon as the truck arrived he grappled on to our dining tent stakes, thinking that they were the stakes to his tent, and carried them back in the woods, as he was anxious to have his tent put up before dark and the dew fell.

Before Mr. Burroughs went to his secluded retreat in the woods, however, around the camp fire Mr. Edison --- mouse.

After our tents were pitched, dinner was served, which was very delicious and much enjoyed. Before long the search lights began to come over the hill to our place in the form of automobile lights coming from Jonesboro to hold our usual evening reception. The visitors were mostly Jonesboro citizens and each one tried to impress us that that city was the oldest in the state; that they had records of Andrew Jackson, etc. Everyone was happy and we all sat around the camp fire and this undoubtedly was our most enjoyable and interesting evening.

Our evening reception was especially noteworthy because Mr. Edison took the ladies up and showed them each one of the tents, how they were equipped and how the electric lights were installed in each tent and he stated to them that the electric current had been brought from Orange. We retired about twelve o'clock.

During the evening Mr. Burroughs lamented the fact that we were camping here and was sure the cattle would come up in the woods and bother him, so he was very much disappointed in the morning when they had not put in their appearance. But they did put in their appearance around our camp - not only the cattle, but the hogs, and upset all the kitchen utensils and paraphernalia that was around. However, everything was speedily washed and cleaned up before breakfast was served.

[ATTACHMENT/ENCLOSURE]

12.

Just as we were finishing our breakfast we saw six or eight men coming up the field each carrying a water melon two and a half feet long (or less). They were a returning delegation from Jonesboro to again urge us to return to their City Hall and look over the records of ancient times and brought a picture of the Boone tree with them.

We broke camp and the delegation informed us that Asheville was eighty miles away. Harvey insisted that we could drive there for lunch and a route was made up for each car with instructions to meet at Grove Park Inn, Asheville, North Carolina. I took precaution to advise the boys that we would go to the Inn and if they did not arrive in time, we would not camp that night, but stop at the hotel, although Mr. Edison said that he did not want to go to Grove Park Inn. He and Mr. Ford were joking about it on the way and Mr. Ford said that if he went there they would not let him in the dining room without a dinner coat; that he had spent two weeks there - had wanted to stay three - but got tired of changing his clothes, so did not remain. I was a little bit worried as to just how Mr. Edison was going to take going to Grove Park Inn. Mr. Ford decided to ride in Harvey's car, so he, Mr. Burroughs, Mr. DeLoach and Harvey started on the way. Mr. Edison, Mr. Oline and myself were in Mr. Edison's car.

When we left we were nearly out of gasoline. However we were only five miles away from a small town and when we asked for gasoline, they directed us across the river and we drove up to a very nice gasoline station. The proprietor advised us that they did not sell gasoline, but after urgent solicitation he finally agreed to give us three gallons to get us to the next town, which was Greenville, about ten miles away.

When we arrived in Greenville they had telephoned that we would soon be there. We drove into the first garage for gasoline, where within a few minutes a very large crowd gathered. This garage only had six gallons in their tank. I went up to a store to buy a pair of glasses and the car came up there. They also had a gasoline tank at this store. The mayor, chief of police and the rest of the good citizens of the town gathered around Mr. Edison. They wanted us to go out and see the tomb. The crowd was so large that we could scarcely leave the second garage and they followed us over to the store where I bought the glasses. It took a good deal of diplomacy and tact on my part to convince the townspeople that our cars had gone on; that we must follow; that our time was short, and that Mr. Edison was becoming impatient. I explained how greatly we regretted that we could not see all their points of interest. The mayor consented to escort us out of the city, and we found him to be a very fine man.

We drove on and when we arrived in Newport it was exceedingly hot. In this small town we saw a Packard car standing in front of a hotel. We stopped and found that the

[ATTACHMENT/ENCLOSURE]

rest of our party had arrived and were having dinner with the threshers. We all went into the dining room and everyone was sitting around at two long tables. Mr. Edison, Mr. Cline and I went in and the land lady persuaded the crowd that was standing around to allow Mr. Edison and I to have a place at the table next to Mr. Ford and Mr. Burroughs. It was a nice dinner and the lady who was running the hotel was a very fine woman. She was more interested in Mr. Burroughs than the rest of the celebrated gentlemen, and impressed Mr. Ford very favorably. He agreed to send her a set of Mr. Burroughs' books.

After dinner as usual Mr. Edison went into a room, sat down and read his paper and the citizens all gathered around to look him over or to get his autograph, etc. Mr. Ford was out around the crowd. Harvey, Mr. Ford and Mr. Burroughs soon drove on, leaving us to wait for Mr. Cline to finish his dinner and for the chauffeur to get gasoline and fix his car. I now recall sitting a long time in the very HOT sun.

Leaving Newport we drove over very rough and mountainous country until we arrived at Hot Springs. After some persuasion I got Mr. Edison to go with me to the German internment camp. When we arrived there we met the colonel in charge, who was very courteous and took us all through the camp. They had about 2200 at this camp, mostly sailors from the interned German boats. They all were alien enemies, and had been there since the outbreak of the war. Many of them had built various things and they had homemade bowling allies, and other sorts of amusements. Some were making pocket books and small trinkets. They all looked well-kept and well-fed and certainly were having a nice vacation.

After spending an hour at this German camp we drove on toward Asheville. From this point to Mars Hill we were climbing and descending mountains for at least twenty-five miles and it certainly was a long twenty-five miles. Our chauffeur was not very considerate of his passengers, although a mishap would have cost his life as well as ours. However, I took no chances and I changed seats with my companion everytime the side of the mountain changed. In other words, Mr. Edison said I always wanted an inside room, and part of the time I was riding on the running board because the drop was too far and the slope too steep to light comfortably in case of a fall.

A very amusing incident happened before we got to Mars Hill. Mr. Edison turned around and said the boys were driving too far - referring to Mr. Ford, Mr. Burroughs, Mr. DeLoach and Harvey. It was then about five o'clock and he said we should be finding a place to camp. I now felt that I must reveal to him the fact that we were headed for Grove Park Inn. So, I said to him that I thought they were going to Asheville, and a few minutes later casually remarked that they really had gone to Grove Park Inn and that we were to meet them there - BUT I stated that if he preferred to camp here we would stop and wait for the trucks. However, Mr. Edison consented to go to Asheville.

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When we arrived at Mars Hill we were received, as our pilots Harvey, Mr. Burroughs, Mr. Ford and Mr. DeLoach had been received - the school children and college girls of the town giving us fruit and flowers. There was a small college in this town and they had a service flag with one hundred and twenty-eight stars. They all were most gracious and very insistent that Mr. Edison and myself say a few words to them. I succeeded in getting out of it by saying that Mr. Edison never talked and I could not, but that Mr. Edison would get up where they all could see him, and he, in his gallant way, got up and bowed to all sides of the automobile. Then we passed on through the town, and before reaching our next objective, Weaversville, we were met by a committee from the Chamber of Commerce of Asheville, welcoming us to Asheville, who as usual wanted to escort us in, but we had had some experience in taking dust from our pilots and advised them that we preferred to drive in ahead and that they should follow us. When we arrived in Weaversville a large crowd had gathered in the street and waved us down with a flag. It was probably the largest reception we had received on our first arrival in a town.

In Weaversville the President of the college in that vicinity came up and shook hands and introduced a number of the citizens and ladies. The ladies had a Red Cross booth on the opposite street and urged us very much to come in and have tea with them. Mr. Edison as usual declined. Then they urged Mr. Edison to talk and he refused, but in his gracious manner bowed to the audience and received applause. Next they urged and insisted on my making a talk and I told them that I never talked. They advised me that Mr. Ford had talked to them - and there and then I made a mistake. I leaned forward to Mr. Edison and jokingly told him that Mr. Ford had made a speech here. The president of the college took advantage of it and was immediately insisting that Mr. Edison make a speech. I had sat back in my seat by that time and Mr. Edison turned around in a very loud voice saying - "Firestone, you make a speech." That was enough for this college president - he jumped up on the car and introduced me to the audience, and I made a short talk.

We then drove on to Asheville, arriving there at eight-thirty and were very cordially received by Mr. Seely, who had reserved comfortable rooms for us. After going to our rooms a fine dinner was served, Mr. Seely having dinner with us. Mr. Edison kept lamenting the fact that his grip and wardrobe had not arrived so that he could shave and put on a clean collar, but he was most congenial. Mr. Seely has a moving picture machine in the lounge, and shows a very high class line of films. It was then late, but Mr. Edison would not go into dinner until we had taken in the movies. After dinner he (Mr. Edison) read until twelve o'clock and kept everybody in the hotel up before he finally decided to retire.

[ATTACHMENT/ENCLOSURE]

15.

In the morning we had breakfast together about ten o'clock. Mr. Ford and I took a long walk over the golf links and up Sunset Mountain. We then talked with Mr. Edison and decided to tour back home and leave our camping outfit to find its way back without us.

After luncheon we went to the front of the hotel and posed for moving pictures and kodak pictures. Then we parted in Harvey's car, Mr. Edison in the front seat and Mr. Ford and I in the rear seat, for Hickory.

We started at three in the pouring rain and were advised that the nearest point was ninety-six miles away, which was the only place where we could stop all night. On our way we passed through a little town called Marion, and we stopped at the hotel for supper. We were not recognized when we entered this hotel and every waiter in this place, namely three colored boys, had tooth picks in their mouths, which seemed to be their only occupation. The one that waited on us was very grouchy. He got confused in taking Mr. Edison's order, and I came to the rescue and asked him if he was ever known to smile. He did not answer me, so I insisted that he smile now. Finally he did, and much to my pleasure and that of the entire party he was smiling from ear to ear - a smile that never wore off while we were there. Mr. Edison gave him a dollar and I thought he would break his face.

After dinner Harvey and I went out to look up a telegraph office to send our congratulations to Robert J. Firestone and his bride. We found the telegraph office closed, but Harvey discovered where the young lady operator lived, so drove to her home and delivered the telegram.

Leaving town just about dark for Hickory we broke a spring. Mr. Ford's mechanical skill came into play once again as he fixed the spring with cord.

Before reaching Hickory a piloting party came out to meet us. We ate the usual amount of dust, but in this case we were thankful for we never would have found the place. We all registered at the Hotel Huffry and they had two rooms with a bath between them for Mr. Edison and Mr. Ford and another room with a bath down stairs which they gave to me. This room had the kitchen on one side and the office on the other. At three o'clock in the morning they began to sweep up the office and clean out and I had only had about three hours sleep - just enough to waken up. If there is anything that troubles me, it is sweeping. I stood it for about half an hour and then jumped out of bed in my night shirt and went into the office and insisted that the colored man clean the office later in the morning. About the time I got things quieted there they began to stir things up in the kitchen, so my night's rest was very much disturbed.

[ATTACHMENT/ENCLOSURE]

16.

The next morning we all had breakfast together and went out and held our usual reception and Mr. Bollick, who has been our agent for carriage tires for the past 15 years at Conover, North Carolina, about fifteen miles from Hickory, drove in to see us.

Our next stop was at Statesville, where Mr. Ford thought it advisable to get more material for repairing the spring and as we stopped in that town we held our usual reception. At Statesville Harvey telephoned to Winston-Salem to have a spring ready for us when we arrived. We drove on hoping that our spring would carry us through to Winston-Salem, but about five miles out of Statesville the spring again gave way and it was necessary to entirely re-adjust it, taking us nearly an hour. While they were repairing the spring, following my usual custom I went to make inquiries and talk to the natives.

On this occasion I found a colored hut. I stopped and talked to the colored mummy, asked her if she lived there and she said she did and had eleven children. She also said they had forty acres of land, which were paid for, and that they rented forty acres beside. Her children were all clean looking, two of them were married. They had a fine cotton field and it was surprising to me to see the signs of intelligence they showed and the good manner in which they lived.

When the spring was repaired we drove on, and at the next town we wanted to have lunch as it was twelve o'clock, but here (Knoxville, a small place), we were received by the citizens, and while they were very polite, they advised us that Winston-Salem had prepared dinner and were waiting for us there, and they thought it would be advisable to drive on, although it was thirty miles to Winston-Salem.

We drove on and about twenty miles out of Winston-Salem were received by the citizens in six cars, and, of course, their first suggestion was that they should show us the way into Winston-Salem, but out of consideration for my companions I advised them that we would drive ahead and that I would get out and ride in a car with the delegation. I asked one of the gentlemen to get in and ride with Mr. Ford and I got in the other car. Harvey drove in ahead at the rate of fifty miles an hour, so we lost sight of the Puckard. We landed at the Forsythe Country Club, where the Rotary Club gave us a luncheon. However, they did not begin cooking their lunch until after we arrived and while waiting we sat on the porch and visited with all the people. Finally we were invited in to eat about three o'clock. The lunch was served very nicely and it was the first "state" dinner we had attended.

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1/.

After our luncheon we had our pictures taken and drove on into the city of Winston-Salem, where we held a larger reception in front of the Motor Company and then drove on our way to Martinsville.

On the way we got stuck in the mud and Mr. Ford and Mr. Edison insisted that we jack up the car, and get out in that manner, but I had more faith in a team of mules, so went down the road and got a team to come up and pull us out. We borrowed a chain from a lady whose husband worked on the railroad. The poor woman did not have any teeth and one of her children was sickly and crippled. She had a cow tied to a tree and I untied the cow and took this chain. During all of this Mr. Ford got very much interested in her welfare - as he had also come up to the house - and has since sent word to her to get a dentist to fix her a set of teeth at his expense and also to take the child to a hospital and have it cured.

When we got out of the mud we thanked the lady and gave her some money - about \$25.00 - and left instructions with her to stop the other cars and send them around another route so they would not have the same misfortune.

Here we met Mr. Ford's agent in Winston-Salem, who with his family were driving to Martinsville, and it was with this gentleman that Mr. Ford left instructions to see that this lady's welfare was taken care of.

When we arrived at Martinsville a real big reception was held. The entire population had congregated at the hotel and all of the young ladies were dressed in white. But we were not so much interested in the crowd as we were interested in getting something to eat and they had supper served for us, shutting the dining room doors to keep out the crowd. Here two young ladies came in and asked for money or contributions to the Red Cross. It was the first place we had been asked for money and needless to say we contributed. However, we declined their invitation to visit the Red Cross Shop. After we had our supper they said they were waiting for us at the moving picture show and insisted that we go up there, but we refused.

One thing I was particularly interested in was the fact that Marshall Fields had a fabric mill and establishment here. I talked to the Manager of this mill and as it was on our way to the next town I persuaded them all to drive out and look over this new development - which I believe is doing a great work. They are doing such good in bringing down the mountaineers and furnishing them with nice homes for the rental of a dollar a month for each room. The mountaineers work in the mills. The manager told me that the reason so many of these mountaineers looked so scrawny and poorly kept was due to the fact that they did not have sufficient food. He stated that they are also furnishing schools, churches, amusements and are paying them reasonable wages.

[ATTACHMENT/ENCLOSURE]

20.

We arrived at Roanoke and in driving into this city stopped at our agent and inquired where to find the best hotel. We told them that when Mr. Oline and the Simplex and Sato and Willmott in the Ford arrived to send them to the Hotel. We got a room at this place and I rested, had lunch and then went out to get a tube and gasoline - but as we left the hotel to make the desired purchases we ran out of gasoline and were detained there until I got a wagon to come and give us sufficient gasoline to drive to a filling station.

As we drove out of Roanoke there was a car evidently trying to pilot us out of the City, but we decided we did not care to have them do it and passed the car against their wishes. They tried to pass us about five miles farther on, but as we were not anxious to have them do so, we started to race. Our car reached a speed of sixty-one miles an hour, which was not pleasing to Mr. Edison, but Mr. Ford and I had enough sporting blood to tell Harvey to keep ahead.

When we reached Natural Bridge, Mr. Ford, Harvey and I paid our dollar and registered to look at Natural Bridge. Mr. Edison remained in the car. It was then about five o'clock. We went down and followed the trail under Natural Bridge to the Cave, the Lost River and other points of interest. As we were returning we were met by a delegation from the hotel, who escorted us back to Mr. Edison's car, where he was surrounded by the guests of the hotel. The proprietor urged us to be his guests for dinner, as it was about seven o'clock and our destination was fourteen miles over the mountains. He was not very successful in persuading Mr. Edison and Mr. Ford to remain - but there were too many good looking young ladies around for Harvey to leave and I finally persuaded Mr. Edison that the proper thing to do was to remain here and get our dinner; that that would land us in Lexington at the hotel after people had retired and we could avoid the crowd there, so he consented and jumped out of the car and we walked up to the Hotel surrounded by ladies. The proprietor gave us front rooms to wash up and had the band playing. We were then escorted to the dining room as objects of much interest; had our dinner, were royally treated, and after our reception party departed for Lexington.

We had reserved rooms at Castle Inn, which was located about one half mile out of the city in a mountain. We thought that would be a quiet hotel to rest at. We had some difficulty in finding this place, but when we did find it we were again received and entertained. In this case by two special parties given by guests at the hotel, and there was considerable rivalry between them as to which one would get the distinguished people as their guests of honor. So after being escorted to our rooms we all congregated on the front porch. One lady was giving a dancing party for her daughter and when she learned that I had my son with me, she came and asked me if I would not bring him and join their party, and I, of course, consented. But when Harvey and I went to the dining room door and looked in, I decided to come back. Whereupon the other lady asked me if I

[ATTACHMENT/ENCLOSURE]

-7-

would not go in and join them in their party. They were having Bevo and cheese. I said - "Certainly, I will be very glad to go."

Mr. Edison and Mr. Ford went out for refreshments and then this lady of the Bevo party said - "I know you want to join the other gentlemen" - and I said "No, not at all." BUT I also said "Let's all go out," so they all got up. On the way out the Bevo lady said coyly - "I'm not invited." So I proceeded to be pilot. Finally, after a very enjoyable evening, even if I did not drink Bevo or eat cheese - we all retired.

The next morning we ordered breakfast for seven o'clock. That was too early for the guests of Castle Inn. However, they were all up, but as this was a special breakfast they were not in the dining room. After breakfast they greeted us in the lobby and reception room and we had our pictures taken and were very polite.

Then we drove on and went through Washington-Lee University at Lexington, Virginia. The president of Washington-Lee University showed us through the tomb of Robert E. Lee and his office just as he had left it.

Mr. Edison's chauffeur and Willmott, who was riding with him that day, had been unable to locate us in Lexington the night before and had driven on to Staunton. They telephoned and we found they were located there so we drove on to meet them.

Nothing of especial importance happened in Staunton, except that we stopped for gasoline and I purchased two collars.

From Staunton we drove to a little town where we stopped for lunch. While having our lunch the Secretary of the Fair Association came in the dining room and asked us if we would not come out to the Fair - that a Senator would speak at three o'clock and that they were very anxious to have us come out - but Mr. Ford declined and after lunch we walked down the street to Mr. Edison's agent and there held a reception and a large crowd congregated around the store. We only remained fifteen or twenty minutes and then drove on to Winchester.

It rained as we came into Winchester and we drove into a garage to put up the top. I called on our agent there, who was a very nice man. Mr. Edison insisted on having some ice cream soda and we got it. Thence started for Hagerstown, Maryland.

Between Roanoke and Hagerstown we passed nineteen toll gates. It was the last day that toll gates were in operation, closing the following day. We arrived in Hagerstown about seven o'clock and had reserved rooms at the Hamilton Hotel. This place did not look good to us when we drove up, so we inquired where we could find the best hotel and discovered that the Hamilton was the best one - so we stayed there, had our

[ATTACHMENT/ENCLOSURE]

dinner and after dinner Mr. Ford and I took a walk around the town, purchased some wool socks, which were the best I ever bought for the money. Socks that I usually paid \$2.00 for I got for fifty cents.

That evening after Mr. Ford and I had made our trip we went to Mr. Edison's room, who had been asleep and sat there visiting and talking over the trip and had a very happy evening together. We all regretted that in the morning we would go in different directions for our homes.

The next morning after breakfast in order not to attract the usual attention while saying goodbye, we decided to drive out with Mr. Edison and avoid the crowd. Several miles out we took kodak and moving pictures of our party and about twelve o'clock Mr. Edison started for Orange and Mr. Ford, Harvey and I for Pittsburgh - Sato and Willmott following with the Ford.

And so it is with many happy thoughts and pleasant memories that I have jotted down roughly a few of the many interesting things that happened on our way - when all cares were put aside and we returned to nature and youth, and I am already looking forward to our jaunt next year.

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H. S. FIRESTONE

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Recipient

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Cable Address "Edison, New York"

From the Laboratory
of
Thomas A. Edison,
Orange, N.J.

Bm

November 21, 1925.

Dr. George F. Kunz,
c/o Tiffany & Company,
Fifth Avenue & 37th Street,
New York City.

Dear Dr. Kunz:

I greatly appreciate your kind invitation to be present at the Testimonial Meeting to be given Dr. Oscar von Miller on Monday evening, but regret that I cannot send you an acceptance.

I am passing through a recurrence of my old stomach trouble, which subjects me to rather strict limitations. It is inadvisable for me to be away from home or the Laboratory just at present.

Yours very truly,

Thomas A. Edison

TAE:O

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[F5B12E], Letter from Rollin Smith to Bill Cyr, September 14th, 1932

Title

[F5B12E], Letter from Rollin Smith to Bill Cyr, September 14th, 1932

Author

Smith, Rollin

Recipient

Cyr, Bill

Mentioned

- Hinds Ketcham & Co
- Edison, Thomas Alva

Date

1932-09-14

Type

Letter

Subject

- Menlo Park reminiscences (1876-1881)
- Incandescent lamp

Folder ID

F5B1-F

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Document ID

F5B12E

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Timestamp

14 September 1932

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THE
NATIONAL HANDBOOK
FOR WIREMEN
1916 EDITION
\$3.00

Rollin Smith Engineering Co.

Electrical Engineering

LOS ANGELES, CALIF.

822 W. 6 ST.

Sept. 14, 1932



Mr. Bill Cyr.
Electrical Dept.
San Francisco, Cal.

Dear Bill -

It occurs to me you folks might find a use
for the enclosed photo and its story as here goes -

This is a photograph of the first Edison bamboo incandescent
lamp used in the lithographing shop of Hinds, Ketchum
& Co., 229 Pearl Street, New York City.

An Edison bi-polar dynamo was belted to a counter-shaft
driven by a vertical single cylinder slow speed steam engine,
that was also belted to printing presses etc. On the
basement this first 110 volt isolated plant, with a
capacity of "60 lamps", was put in service in January,
1881. It was the first commercial lighting plant on
land, using the parallel or, as it was then called, the
multiple system of lighting. A few months previous a
steam-boat had been equipped with a 110 volt plant and
the new Edison carbon lamps that subdivided electric
light successfully for the first time.

It is interesting to note that the mains and circuit
wires were bare copper supported on wooden cleats and that
the "drop cords" were double cotton covered - at first separated
and later twisted together. Fuse blocks were placed on the
ceiling and fusing was single pole! Edison was right.

The single pole wooden fuse block, wooden plug fuse
and the "hard wood insulation" sockets, with brass shells,
that depict the development of the Edison socket - from
the first one, into which the glass lamp globe was glued
with plaster of paris, to the first standard Edison base type
with a key switch that had an insulated handle, are on
exhibit in the "Edison Case" in the "History of
Electricity" at the Los Angeles Museum, Exposition Park,
Los Angeles, U. S. A.

Sincerely Rollin Smith

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[F5B12F], Letter from Wilson Stout Howell to Ward Harris, August 1st, 1941

Title

[F5B12F], Letter from Wilson Stout Howell to Ward Harris, August 1st, 1941

Author

Howell, Wilson Stout

Recipient

Harris, Ward

Mentioned

- Moses, Otto A
- Edison, Thomas Alva

Date

1941-08-01

Type

Letter

Subject

- TAE personality and character
- Menlo Park reminiscences (1876-1881)
- Incandescent lamp
- Isolated stations

Folder ID

F5B1-F

Microfilm ID

284:197

Document ID

F5B12F

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Timestamp

1 August 1941

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Escondido, California
August 1, 1941

Mr. Ward Harris
519 Market Street
San Francisco, California

Dear Mr. Harris:

This piece of old hand insulated copper wire is a real historical relic for it is part of the first underground cable to carry electric current for incandescent electric lights. It is part of what Mr. Edison used at Menlo Park, N. J., in 1880. This wire carried electric current, generated on Mr. Edison's first Bi-polar Generators, that was laid underground for demonstrating the Edison Incandescent System of lighting to the Councilmen of the City of New York.

The reason for this demonstration was that Mr. Edison wanted a Franchise to install an Electric Generating Station on Pearl Street. This was to become the World's first centralized electric distribution system for incandescent lighting.

Mr. Edison delegated me to find a cheap practical insulation. He said, "Go into my library, Howell, and read everything on insulation and if the books in foreign languages stump you, get Dr. Moses to translate for you".

I read the books and I smoked out the Chemist, Dr. Moses, with smoke and stonches from the iron pots in which the compounds were stewed, but the compound gave such fine results that Mr. Edison adopted it for this important demonstration. It consisted of Trinidad asphaltum, boiled linseed oil and beeswax.

Unbleached muslin was impregnated with this compound and three layers were wrapped around the copper wire. The results were very good for it did a good job while in use and lay underground at Menlo Park for fifty years after our successful demonstration to the New York Councilmen.

Sincerely yours

Wilson S. Howell

Wilson S. Howell
Edison Pioneer, 1879